

The Lord told Noah to Build an Ark

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain the fact that God chose to show grace to Noah and his family so they could repopulate the earth. The Lord shows us three things about the character of Noah as we begin these verses.

Genesis 6:9-13 says, “This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God. And Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. And God said to Noah, ‘The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.’” In these verses, the Lord tells us three things about the character of Noah. First, we see that Noah was a just man. The word translated “just” means *righteous or one who is right with God*. Abraham used this word seven times as he talked with the Lord in Genesis 18:23-28. Genesis 18:23-24 says, “And Abraham came near and said, ‘Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous that were in it?’” The word is translated “righteous” each of the seven times in these and the following verses.

Second, we see that Noah was perfect in his time. The word translated “perfect” means *complete or sound* and was most often translated “without blemish”. Exodus 12:5 says, “Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take *it* from the sheep or from the goats.” In this verse, we see that God told Moses the Passover lambs were to be without blemish. As a result, Noah was very different than the rest of the people of his day, since we saw that the thoughts of the hearts of most of the people were only evil continually.

Third, we see that Noah walked with God. This phrase is only used three times in the Bible. The other two are in Genesis 5:22-24, where we read, “After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and had sons and daughters. So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. And Enoch walked with God; and he *was* not, for God took him.” In these verses, we see that God took Enoch to heaven without dying because he walked with God. God chose to leave Noah on the earth to repopulate the earth after the flood. God blessed both men in different ways because they walked with God.

In contrast, we see that the earth was corrupt before God and that it was filled with violence because the thoughts of most of the people were only evil continually. The word translated “corrupt” is most often translated “destroy”. Here, in Genesis 6:11-13, the word is used four times and is translated three times by the word “corrupt” in verses 11-12 and once by the word “destroy” as God told Noah in verse 13, “...the end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.” God said that the earth had become filled with violence through the people who were on the earth, so that was why it was now necessary for Him to destroy them along with the rest of the earth.

God went on to tell Noah how he and his family would be preserved when God destroyed the earth and all of the people on it. Genesis 6:14-17 says, “Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch. And this is how you shall make it: The length of the ark *shall be* three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above; and set the door of the ark in its side. You shall make it *with* lower, second, and third *decks*. And behold, I Myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which *is* the breath of life; everything that *is* on the earth shall die.” Here, we see that God told Noah He would completely destroy the earth with a flood. However, Noah and his family would be preserved through the flood in the ark Noah was to build.

We see that God told Noah the size of the ark that he was to build to preserve his family and two of every kind of creature on the earth (seven for the animals and birds that were considered clean animals). The word translated “ark” is used twenty-eight times in the Old Testament and twenty-six of those times are in Genesis chapters 6-9. The other two uses are in Exodus 2:3 and 5, where the mother of Moses made an ark of bulrushes and placed Moses in it after Pharaoh had ordered all of the male babies of Israel to be killed. This ark was probably shaped more like a box than an ocean-going ship because its purpose was to preserve Noah, his family, and the animals through the flood. It did not need to move with any speed to get from one place to another, in contrast to most boats.

The ark was to be made of gopher wood. Since this is the only place in the Old Testament where this word is used, we cannot look at other passages to learn more about the kind of tree that is mentioned here. It is probable that it was either the cypress tree, the cedar tree, or some other similar tree. God told Noah to make rooms in the ark so the various animals and their food could be separated. God said that the ark was to be covered on both the inside and the outside with pitch. This was to make the ark waterproof so it would not leak. We are also given the size of the ark. It was to be three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide, and thirty cubits high. A cubit is the length from the elbow of a man to the top of the middle finger, so it is normally about eighteen inches. That meant the ark was about four hundred and fifty feet long, seventy-five feet wide, and forty-five feet high. It was to have three decks - so there was about fifteen feet between each deck which would allow room for the taller animals and also plenty of room for air to circulate in the ark.

God then told Noah that He was going to bring floodwaters on the earth. Before the flood, there was no rain. Instead, Genesis 2:6 says, “But a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.” As a result, God probably had to explain to Noah that floodwaters meant the entire earth would be covered by water for a period of about a year. The word translated “flood” is used twelve times in chapters 6-11 of Genesis and one time in Psalm 29:10. That verse says, “The Lord sat *enthroned* at the Flood, and the Lord sits as King forever.” In that verse, David was referring back to the flood in the time of Noah. God said this flood would cover the entire earth so everything that had the breath of life on the earth would die.

However, God told Noah, in Genesis 6:18-22, “But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark—you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you. And of every living thing of all flesh you shall bring two of every *sort* into the ark, to keep *them* alive with you; they shall be male and female. Of the birds after their kind, of animals after their kind, and of

every creeping thing of the earth after its kind, two of every *kind* will come to you to keep *them* alive. And you shall take for yourself of all food that is eaten, and you shall gather *it* to yourself; and it shall be food for you and for them.’ Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did.”

Here, we see that God promised He would establish His covenant with Noah. God told Noah that when the ark was finished, he would take his family, as well as two of every kind of creature on earth, onto the ark in order to preserve them alive. That covenant is given in Genesis 9:9-17, where we read, “‘And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you, and with every living creature that *is* with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth. Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.’ And God said: ‘This *is* the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that *is* with you, for perpetual generations: I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember My covenant which *is* between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that *is* on the earth.’ And God said to Noah, ‘This *is* the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that *is* on the earth.’” We will look at this covenant in greater detail in a later topic.

We see that Noah was to take two of every creature with him on the ark so all of the creatures would be left alive. These two of each kind were to be a male and a female. This included every kind of bird, animal, and creeping things. Then, Genesis 7:2–3 adds, “‘You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that *are* unclean, a male and his female; also seven each of birds of the air, male and female, to keep the species alive on the face of all the earth.’” This meant there would be seven of each of the animals that were clean animals. In addition, Noah was told to take enough food for all of his family, plus enough food for all of the birds, animals, and creeping things. Since they were going to be on the ark a little over a year, this meant gathering a lot of food as well. Noah then did all that God commanded. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain the instructions the Lord gave to Noah after He told him to build an ark to preserve his family. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain these things.